

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 14, 2004, and made final, and the Advisory Action mailed March 19, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-3, 6, 7 and 32-35 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-7 and 32 stand rejected. Claims 33-35 stand objected to. Claims 4, 5, and 8-31 have been cancelled.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), a two month extension of time is submitted herewith to extend the due date of the response to the Office Action dated November 14, 2003, for the above-identified patent application from February 14, 2004, through and including April 14, 2004. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.17(a)(2), authorization to charge a deposit account in the amount of \$420.00 to cover this extension of time request also is submitted herewith.

The undersigned wishes to express his appreciation to the Examiner for the courtesies that he extended during a telephone interview that occurred on March 30, 2004. The 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph rejection was discussed. Although agreement was not reached, the undersigned agreed to file a response for consideration.

The rejection of Claims 1-7 and 32-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 32 have been amended to remove the phrase "the spacer configured to move along a length of the biasing member when the biasing member is stationary". Accordingly, Claims 1-3, 6, 7 and 32-35 are submitted to overcome the Section 112, first paragraph rejection. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants request the Section 112, first paragraph, rejection of Claims 1-7 and 32-35 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-7 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirata (U.S. Patent No. 4,063,054) is respectfully traversed.

Hirata describes a key switch equipped with a contact piece. The contact piece is pressed down by a key top (13) actuated by an external force (such as a finger) thereby closing an electric circuit. A key top (13) is included with a downwardly extending protruding part (14) on the bottom thereof, and engages an elastic element, for example a coil

spring (15), that surrounds protruding part (14). The remainder of key top (13) is coupled to a central portion (17) of a first plate spring member (16). A peripheral portion (19) of member (16) is placed on an insulating spacer (20). When key top (13) is depressed, protruding portion (14) enters an opening formed in central portion (17) and depresses a central portion (23) of a second plate spring member (22). Spacer (20) limits an amount of travel of spring member (16). Notably, Hirata does not describe nor suggest a spring front end configured to receive and mount on a moving contact retaining boss and a spring rear end configured to receive and mount on a contact carrier mounting tab. Additionally, Hirata does not describe nor suggest that the central portion includes a retaining boss or a mounting tab for a spring.

Claim 1 recites “a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, wherein the moving contact includes a retaining boss and wherein the contact carrier includes a mounting tab, said method comprising the steps of providing a hollow spacer...providing a biasing member comprising a front end and a rear end...positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member...and installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier such that the biasing member front end receives and is mounted on the moving contact retaining boss and the biasing member rear end receives and is mounted on the contact carrier mounting tab.”

Hirata does not describe nor suggest a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, wherein the moving contact includes a retaining boss and wherein the contact carrier includes a mounting tab, the method includes providing a hollow spacer, providing a biasing member that includes a front end and a rear end, positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member, installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier such that the biasing member front end receives and is mounted on the moving contact retaining boss and the biasing member rear end receives and is mounted on the contact carrier mounting tab. Rather, and in contrast to the present invention, Hirata describes a key top that includes a protruding part configured to extend through a spring, wherein the spring is biased between the key top and the central portion when an external force is applied to the key top. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Hirata.

Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled. When the recitations of Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 likewise are patentable over Hirata.

Claim 32 recites “a method for limiting movement of a moving contact, said method comprising providing a lighting contactor including an access slot, the moving contact, and a contact carrier, wherein the access slot includes a longitudinal axis, the moving contact includes a retaining boss, and the contact carrier includes a mounting tab...providing a spacer with at least one longitudinal opening...and inserting a biasing member through the at least one longitudinal opening of the spacer, such that a biasing member front end receives and is frictionally engaged with the retaining boss and a biasing member rear end receives and is mounted on the mounting tab.”

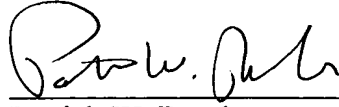
Hirata does not describe nor suggest a method for limiting movement of a moving contact, wherein the method includes providing a lighting contactor including an access slot, the moving contact, and a contact carrier, wherein the access slot includes a longitudinal axis, the moving contact includes a retaining boss, and the contact carrier includes a mounting tab, providing a spacer with at least one longitudinal opening, and inserting a biasing member through the at least one longitudinal opening of the spacer, such that a biasing member front end receives and is frictionally engaged with the retaining boss and a biasing member rear end receives and is mounted on the mounting tab. Rather, and in contrast to the present invention, Hirata describes a key top that includes a protruding part configured to extend through a spring, wherein the spring is biased between the key top and the central portion when an external force is applied to the key top. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 32 is submitted to be patentable over Hirata.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-7 and 32 be withdrawn.

The objection to Claims 33-35 under 35 C.F.R. 1.75(c) is respectfully traversed. More specifically, Claims 33-35 were previously amended in the entered Amendment to depend from independent Claim 32. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objection to Claims 33-35 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick W. Rasche", written over a horizontal line.

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